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ABSTRACT

The validity of a behavioral rating scale for identifying gifted and creative students was investigated for three ethnic groups by socioeconomic status. These groups were mid to high socio-economic status (SES) Anglo, low SES Anglo, and low SES Hispanic. The Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS) was studied to provide data about its utility in assessing giftedness. Data were examined to determine whether the SRBCSS differentially predicted scholastic achievement for different cultural or socioeconomic groups. Elementary school gifted Anglo and Hispanic students comprised the sample. All students were administered the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). Regression analyses were computed between the SRBCSS and the SAT. Results indicated that the SRBCSS seemed to have minimal predictive validity for intelligence or achievement test performance by Anglo students. However, there may be value in its use in identification of gifted Hispanic students. The scale may also be useful in determining the differences in behavioral characteristics of giftedness among students of various sociocultural groups. (DWH)

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Validity of the SRBCSS for Hispanic and Anglo Gifted Students

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Abstract

The validity of a recently published behavioral rating scale for identifying gifted and creative students (Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students) (SRBCSS) was investigated for three ethnic by socioeconomic groups. Regression analyses were computed between the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) and the SRBCSS, and a standardized intelligence test and the SRBCSS. Results indicated low to moderate relationships between the variables for Anglos from mid-high and low socioeconomic backgrounds. Correlations were higher for a group of low socioeconomic Hispanics, with the highest correlations being between the Reading Comprehension subtest of the SAT and both the Motivation and Creativity scales of the SRBCSS. Implications for practice and future investigations are discussed.

Validity of the Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students for Gifted Students from Three Sociocultural Groups

The past decade witnessed a great deal of controversy and subsequent empirical research regarding the issues of the fairness and validity of traditional assessment techniques for use with children from culturally different or disadvantaged environments. For the most part, the presently accumulated body of research has dealt with assessment procedures as they are applied to children who are experiencing learning difficulties. However, there has been a recent interest in the assessment and identification of disadvantaged youth who may be intellectually gifted. Because many abilities possessed by children from low socioeconomic environments are not likely to be evidenced if traditional assessment techniques are used (Anderson, 1960; Torrance, 1970, 1974), there is an increasing interest in alternative instruments and procedures for identifying gifted children from this group (Samuda, 1975; Torrance, 1973; Treffinger, Pyryt, Hawk, & Houseman, 1979).

Behavioral rating scales may be an assessment technique that will aid in the identification of gifted children from majority, as well as minority, home environments. If such scales prove to have predictive validity, they may provide a viable alternative or at least an adjunct to the administration of an individual intelligence test. The use of such scales would also provide additional behavioral information which could be used in program planning for children who have been identified as gifted. A further benefit

of such scales, should they prove to be a valid screening instrument, is that they could save the expense and time required for a school psychologist to conduct a complete intellectual evaluation.

A recent attempt at expanding the range of criteria and the process of identifying gifted students is represented by the Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS) (Renzulli, Smith, White, Callahan, & Hartman, 1976). The SRBCSS is comprised of ten scales, of which the first three (Learning, Motivation, and Creativity) the authors purport to be consistent with objectives of most programs aimed at serving the gifted. The authors recommend the remaining seven scales be used selectively, as they measure behavioral characteristics that are compatible with specific program objectives. In the SRBCSS manual, the authors report significant differences in ratings between groups of gifted and average fifth-grade students on the main three scales, as well as a fourth scale (Leadership). They also report significant correlations between gifted students' ratings on the Learning and Motivation Scales and standardized intelligence tests, as well as significant correlations between the Creativity Scale and the verbal subscores of the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1966).

Before the SRBCSS is used in screening children for gifted programs, additional data is needed regarding its predictive validity. Although the SRBCSS authors state that the correlational data were obtained from a sample of fifth-grade students from a variety of socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, it does not report the numbers or percentages of students represented in each of these categories. Such information is

important in the investigation of the psychometric properties and subsequent utility of any instrument. This is particularly true in regard to the question of differential validity. At the present time, only one study has examined the predictive validity of the SRBCSS (Rust & Lose, 1980). The investigators found that ratings of students referred for gifted programs were poor predictors of subsequent performance on a standardized intelligence test. It should be noted that teachers in this study rated students (whom they had referred) on the SRBCSS, and on a later date the intelligence test was administered. Since the nominating teachers were aware that their ratings were one of the criteria in the selection process, there would appear to exist a strong possibility that a positive bias was operating in the teachers' ratings. This experimental procedure may have been one reason that SRBCSS ratings were such poor predictors of IQ.

The present study investigated the predictive validity of the SRBCSS for a sample of low and middle-high SES gifted students in grades 3 through 6. The study was thus designed to provide data in reference to (a) the overall utility of the SRBCSS in assessing giftedness, and (b) whether the SRBCSS differentially predicts scholastic achievement for different cultural or socioeconomic groups.

Method

Subjects

The sample was drawn from the entire population of Anglo and Hispanic gifted students in grades 1 through 6 in a large, suburban elementary school district in the southwestern United States. While the initial

intention of the study was to examine the predictive validity of the ratings for students in all grades, the small number of students in grades 1 and 2 across groups impeded comparisons for these students. Thus, analyses were confined to students (N = 402) in grades 3 through 6.

All students had been placed in a gifted program based upon recommendations from one teacher and scoring two standard deviations above the mean on an individual intelligence test which was administered by a certified school psychologist. However, if any students scored within one standard error of measurement, they could be recommended for the program provided additional evidence of giftedness was provided such as outstanding academic achievement or creativity. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children--Revised (WISC-R) (Wechsler, 1974) or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale Form L-M (Terman & Merrill, 1973) were the instruments used to assess all of the students.

Students were categorized as belonging to low or mid-high SES groups on the basis of their living in school attendance areas that received Department of Education Title I funding. This funding is allocated based upon the percentage of children at each school who are eligible for free breakfasts and free or reduced lunches. This constituted eight schools ranging in free meal percentages from 22.5% to 44.2% ($\bar{X}$ = 34.23%). This resulted in a total of 318 Anglo students in the mid-high SES category, 61 Anglo students in the low SES category, and 23 Hispanics in the low SES category. Four Hispanic students were classified as mid-high SES, but because of this small number, their performances were not analyzed. The sample constituted 6% of the entire mid-high Anglo school district

population, 2% of the low SES Anglo population, and 2% of the low SES Hispanic population.

Procedure

All students were administered the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) (Madden, Gardner, Rudman, Karlsen, & Merwin, 1974) by their classroom teachers according to procedures described in the administration manual. Approximately 1 week later, all teachers in the gifted program completed the Learning, Motivation, Creativity, and Planning subscales of the SRBCSS on each of their students. Since results of the SAT were not yet scored, none of these teachers had knowledge of any of their students' performance, nor knowledge that this study was being conducted.

Results

Students' performances classified according to ethnic and socioeconomic status on the SAT and the SRBCSS are displayed in Table 1 in terms of means and standard deviations. These data were additionally categorized into grade levels which were grouped according to equivalence in item content on the SAT, thus making the grade equivalent scores suitable for comparative purposes within each grouping. Students' performances on either the WISC-R or Stanford-Binet are displayed in Table 2.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

The relationship between students' rated performances on the SRBCSS and their academic achievement, as measured by the SAT is illustrated in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6. Forward stepwise regression analyses were computed

for students in each of the three ethnic by SES groups to determine the correlation (multiple R) and the amount of variance accounted for (R^2) by SAT scores when they were used to predict SRBCSS ratings. Across each of the four SRBCSS scales, there were considerable differences among the three groups, as well as grade level differences within some groups on some of the scales. In general, the correlations between SAT scores and SRBCSS ratings were low for the mid-high Anglo group, ranging from .15 to .36.

Insert Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 about here

Moderate correlations were found between SAT scores and SRBCSS ratings for the low SES Anglo group, ranging from .23 (between Math Computation and the Motivation scale) to .62 (between Math Application and the Planning scale). A finding of interest from this group was that the relationship between SAT performance and SRBCSS ratings were consistently higher for the fifth-sixth grade students than for the third-fourth grade students. The opposite trend was found for the low SES Hispanic group; correlations were higher for the third-fourth grade students than for the fifth-sixth group. More importantly, however, the highest degrees of relationships between any of the SAT subtests and any of the four SRBCSS scales were found within this group. These were correlations of .73 between Reading Comprehension and ratings on both the Motivation and Creativity scales for the third-fourth grade students.

The correlations between achievement and SRBCSS ratings for this study, thus differ somewhat from those reported by Renzulli et al. (1976).

However, it is difficult to evaluate these differences, since they did not report the specific achievement measure, and only correlated achievement scores with ratings on the Learning and Motivation scales. Specifically, Renzulli and associates reported that the correlations between these scales and language achievement were .41 and .42, respectively; while the correlations between the two scales and mathematics achievement were .57 and .60, respectively.

The relationship between children's performances on intelligence tests and their ratings on the SRBCSS were also examined via regression analyses (see Table 7). In general, full-scale performances on the Stanford-Binet or the WISC-R correlated only minimally with teachers' ratings on the various SRBCSS scales. An exception was observed for the low SES Hispanic children who were administered the WISC-R. Their performances on the WISC-R accounted for 32% of the variance in rated performance on the Motivation scale and 57% of the variance on the Planning scale. Hispanics' performances could not be evaluated on the Stanford Binet due to the fact that only two children were administered the test.

When examining the results of studies like the present where subjects are selected for inclusion based on teacher perceptions of superior achievement or intelligence, one must recognize the possibility of statistical attenuation due to a restricted range in test scores. A restricted range of scores, IQ and/or achievement, would effect regression analyses by generally depressing correlations. In the present study, there appeared to be no such attenuation concerning the distribution of SAT scores, however, the IQ performances of one group (Anglo, Low SES) although normally distributed had a restricted range relative to the other two groups.

Discussion

The results of the IQ and SRBCSS correlations in the present study are basically consistent with the findings of Rust and Lose (1980), in which WISC-R scores were not correlated significantly with the Learning, Motivation, or Creativity scales. Hence, based on the composite results of these two studies, the SRBCSS does not appear to be significantly correlated with IQ performances and cannot with confidence be used to predict intellectual performance of Anglo students. Renzulli et al. (1976), however, reported that IQ (test unspecified) correlated .61 with the Learning scale and .36 with the Motivation.

While it is true that the authors' intention in developing the SRBCSS was to develop an adjunct measure in identifying gifted students, there remains an uncertainty as to whether the scales serve this purpose. The results of the present investigation, as well as one previous study (Rust & Lose, 1980), indicate the SRBCSS has minimal predictive validity when one's purpose is to predict Anglo students' performance on IQ or achievement tests. However, based on the data from this preliminary study, there may be value in its use in identification of gifted Hispanic students. Reading Comprehension scores on the SAT accounted for 53% and 54% of the variance on the Motivation and Creativity scales for Hispanic, third and fourth-grade students. On one hand, this is very encouraging, particularly because the findings pertain tc the younger group of students, thus making it potentially useful in early identification. At the same time, the fact that the greatest relationship was found between SAT Reading Comprehension scores and Creativity ratings is somewhat puzzling. The SRBCSS manual

does not even report correlations between the Creativity scale and any achievement measure. A tentative speculation regarding this finding may be that the SRBCSS scales may be measuring characteristics that are indicative of different cognitive processes for different cultural groups. While there is some evidence, based upon a sample of primarily Anglo students, that the scales of the SRBCSS are, in fact, measuring a single factor (Burke, Haworth, & Ware, in press), this may not be the case for Hispanics.

Based upon the findings of this study, it would appear that one of the most promising applications of the SRBCSS may lie in its use in the identification of gifted Hispanic students. The scales may also prove to be useful in investigating the existence of differences in the behavioral characteristics of giftedness among students of various sociocultural groups. In conducting such research, however, consideration should also be given to the possibility of developmental differences in those characteristics delineated by the scales, as well as differences in ratings as a function of ethnicity and/or sex bias.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Gifted Anglo and Hispanic Students' Performances on the SRBCSS and SAT

		Anglo, Mid-to-High SES		Anglo, Low SES		Hispanic, Low SES	
		Gr 3 & 4 (N = 159)	Gr 5 & 6 (N = 158)	Gr 3 & 4 (N = 40)	Gr 5 & 6 (N = 21)	Gr 3 & 4 (N = 11)	Gr 5 & 6 (N = 12)
SRBCSS							
Learning	$\bar{X}$	23.65	24.72	24.00	26.62	18.64	24.08
	SD	5.27	4.67	6.33	5.86	5.39	6.70
Motivation	$\bar{X}$	24.97	25.84	24.18	25.90	21.64	24.25
	SD	5.46	4.88	6.72	5.43	4.95	6.05
Planning	$\bar{X}$	35.38	41.15	41.20	42.38	33.91	39.33
	SD	10.50	9.58	13.98	10.59	9.89	12.92
Creativity	$\bar{X}$	28.77	28.64	29.00	32.52	27.82	27.08
	SD	6.23	6.41	7.50	5.88	6.42	7.67
SAT							
Vocabulary	$\bar{X}$	6.90	9.50	7.20	9.60	5.10	8.50
	SD	1.40	1.30	1.50	1.10	1.20	1.90
Reading Comprehension	$\bar{X}$	7.40	10.00	7.30	9.40	5.60	8.40
	SD	1.50	1.00	1.30	1.80	1.00	1.90
Word Study	$\bar{X}$	7.70	9.90	7.70	9.40	6.90	8.80
	SD	1.60	1.10	1.30	1.60	1.10	1.80
Math Concepts	$\bar{X}$	7.00	9.60	6.70	8.70	5.80	7.90
	SD	1.40	1.00	1.40	1.80	0.70	1.50
Math Computation	$\bar{X}$	6.20	9.40	6.00	9.00	6.00	8.20
	SD	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.80	0.90	1.60
Math Application	$\bar{X}$	6.80	9.90	6.60	8.80	5.70	7.60
	SD	1.50	1.00	1.50	1.90	0.90	2.00

Note. Data for SRBCSS are raw scores; SAT are grade equivalent scores.

Table 2

IQ Means and Standard Deviations of Students on the WISC-R or Stanford-Binet

		Anglo, Mid-to-High SES		Anglo, Low SES		Hispanic, Low SES	
		Gr 3 & 4	Gr 5 & 6	Gr 3 & 4	Gr 5 & 6	Gr 3 & 4	Gr 5 & 6
WISC-R	$\bar{X}$	135.86	137.17	134.63	129.67	131.83	124.33
	SD	6.80	6.82	5.85	3.97	6.79	11.29
	N	37	36	19	9	6	6
Stanford-Binet	$\bar{X}$	140.05	139.18	140.29	136.83	--	131.00
	SD	35.76	25.78	12.60	8.61	--	15.56
	N	128	150	21	12	--	2

Note. The WISC-R or Stanford-Binet was not given to students whose linguistic or cultural background was deemed such that their cognitive abilities were more appropriately evaluated by other measures.

Table 3

Regression Analysis of Students' Performance on the SAT with Teachers' Ratings on the SRBCSS Learning Scale

Anglo, Mid-to-High SES			Anglo, Low SES			Hispanic, Low SES		
Variable	Mult. R	R^2	Variable	Mult. R	R^2	Variable	Mult. R	R^2
Third and Fourth Graders								
RCOMP	.26	.06	MCOMP	.35	.12	RCOMP	.51	.26
VOC	.27	.07	WS	.40	.16	MCON	.64	.42
MCON	.27	.07	MAPP	.44	.19	VOC	.74	.55
MAPP	.28	.08	MCON	.45	.20	WS	.75	.57
MCOMP	.28	.08	RCOMP	.46	.21	MAPP	.76	.58
						MCOMP	.76	.58
Fifth and Sixth Graders								
RCOMP	.36	.13	MAPP	.58	.34	VOC	.29	.08
WS	.42	.18	VOC	.62	.38	RCOMP	.50	.25
VOC	.44	.19	MCON	.63	.39	MCOMP	.51	.26
MCON	.45	.20	MCOMP	.64	.41	MAPP	.62	.38
MCOMP	.47	.22	RCOMP	.65	.42	WS	.64	.41
MAPP	.47	.22	WS	.65	.43			

Note. A forward stepwise regression procedure was used. Thus, the SAT subtest variables which accounted for a significant portion of variance in SRBCSS scores are listed according to the order in which they were entered into the regression equation. WS = Word Study; VOC = Vocabulary; RCOMP = Reading Comprehension; MCON = Math Concepts; MCOMP = Math Computation; MAPP = Math Application.

Table 4

Regression Analysis of Students' Performance on the SAT with Teachers' Ratings on the SRBCSS Motivational Scale

Anglo, Mid-to-High SES			Anglo, Low SES			Hispanic, Low SES		
Variable	Mult. R	R^2	Variable	Mult. R	R^2	Variable	Mult. R	R^2
Third and Fourth Graders								
RCOMP	.23	.05	MCOMP	.23	.05	RCOMP	.73	.53
MAPP	.28	.08	WS	.30	.09	MCON	.86	.75
VOC	.28	.08	MAPP	.34	.12	VOC	.91	.83
MCOMP	.29	.08	RCOMP	.36	.13	WS	.94	.88
MCON	.29	.08	MCON	.37	.14	MCOMP	.95	.91
WS	.29	.08	VOC	.37	.14			
Fifth and Sixth Graders								
WS	.35	.12	RCOMP	.46	.21	MCOMP	.33	.11
RCOMP	.37	.14	MCOMP	.50	.25	WS	.36	.13
MCOMP	.39	.15	MAPP	.63	.39	RCOMP	.39	.15
MCON	.42	.17	MCON	.65	.42	VOC	.49	.24
VOC	.43	.18	VOC	.66	.43	MAPP	.58	.34
MAPP	.43	.18				MCON	.59	.34

Note. A forward stepwise regression procedure was used. Thus, the SAT subtest variables which accounted for a significant portion of variance in SRBCSS scores are listed according to the order in which they were entered into the regression equation. WS = Word Study; VOC = Vocabulary; RCOMP = Reading Comprehension; MCON = Math Concepts; MCOMP = Math Computation; MAPP = Math Application.

Table 5

Regression Analysis of Students' Performance on the SAT with Teachers' Ratings on the SRBCSS Planning Scale

Anglo, Mid-to-High SES			Anglo, Low SES			Hispanic, Low SES		
Variable	Mult. R	R^2	Variable	Mult. R	R^2	Variable	Mult. R	R^2
Third and Fourth Graders								
RCOMP	.25	.06	MCOMP	.33	.11	WS	.58	.34
MCON	.28	.08	WS	.42	.18	MCOMP	.76	.57
VOC	.30	.09	RCOMP	.44	.20	MAPP	.80	.54
WS	.30	.09	MCON	.45	.21	MCON	.82	.67
MCOMP	.31	.09	VOC	.46	.21	RCOMP	.82	.67
MAPP	.31	.10				VOC	.82	.67
Fifth and Sixth Graders								
WS	.36	.13	MAPP	.62	.38	VOC	.56	.32
RCOMP	.39	.16	MCOMP	.66	.43	MCON	.64	.41
MCOMP	.41	.17	VOC	.67	.45	RCOMP	.69	.48
MCON	.44	.19	WS	.68	.46	MCOMP	.73	.53
MAPP	.44	.19	MCON	.69	.47	WS	.76	.58
VOC	.44	.19	RCOMP	.69	.48	MAPP	.77	.60

Note. A forward stepwise regression procedure was used. Thus, the SAT subtest variables which accounted for a significant portion of variance in SRBCSS scores are listed according to the order in which they were entered into the regression equation. WS = Word Study; VOC = Vocabulary; RCOMP = Reading Comprehension; MCON = Math Concepts; MCOMP = Math Computation; MAPP = Math Application.

Table 6

Regression Analysis of Students' Performance on the SAT with Teachers' Ratings on the SRBCSS Creativity Scale

Anglo, Mid-to-High SES			Anglo, Low SES			Hispanic, Low SES		
Variable	Mult. R	R^2	Variable	Mult. R.	R^2	Variable	Mult. R	R^2
Third and Fourth Graders								
MAPP	.15	.02	WS	.29	.08	RCOMP	.73	.54
RCOMP	.21	.04	MCON	.42	.17	MCON	.76	.58
MCOMP	.23	.05	VOC	.46	.21	VOC	.80	.64
VOC	.24	.06	RCOMP	.49	.24	MAPP	.81	.65
WS	.24	.06	MCOMP	.55	.30	MCOMP	.85	.72
MCON	.24	.06	MAPP	.57	.32			
Fifth and Sixth Graders								
RCOMP	.20	.04	WS	.59	.35	MAPP	.34	.11
VOC	.24	.06	RCOMP	.65	.42	WS	.63	.40
MCON	.28	.08	MCOMP	.69	.48	MCON	.70	.49
WS	.30	.09	MAPP	.74	.55	MCOMP	.73	.53
MAPP	.32	.10	MCON	.75	.56	VOC	.74	.54
MCOMP	.33	.11	VOC	.75	.56	RCOMP	.75	.56

Note. A forward stepwise regression procedure was used. Thus, the SAT subtest variables which accounted for a significant portion of variance in SRBCSS scores are listed according to the order in which they were entered into the regression equation. WS = Word Study; VOC = Vocabulary; RCOMP = Reading Comprehension; MCON = Math Concepts; MCOMP = Math Computation; MAPP = Math Application.